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Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrew Rippin (eds.), *Islam in the Eyes of the West: images and realities in an age of terror*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, ix + 290 pp., ISBN 978-0-415-56414-4, n.p.

This book, one of the outcomes of a conference at the University of Victoria in 2008, is a valuable Canadian contribution to the discussion of a significant contemporary issue. Of its fifteen contributors, including the two editors, seven are based in Canada, five in the United States (one with an additional association with Cairo), and one each in Denmark, Syria, and Japan. And of its thirteen chapters, six investigate different aspects of the relationship between the World of Islam and the West in terms of its origins, concepts and contemporary realities; three focus on media presentations, including in Japan (Chapter 7), with an interesting examination of the extent to which Islam is considered as 'distant' (i.e. Middle Eastern) or 'local' (i.e. Japan's regional neighbours in Central or South-East Asia); and four look ahead, aspiring to be 'enlightening, instructive and forward-thinking' (p. 10).

As the editors make clear in the preface, and as the title of the original conference on which the book is based ('The Muslim World and the West: emerging avenues for convergence'), suggests, there is plenty of contemporary discussion which focuses on

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confrontation. What about the other side of the coin, however, in other words an emphasis on interaction and synergies? The fact that the title of the book is so different, however, particularly through the seemingly mandatory inclusion of a reference to 'an age of terror', illustrates the problem quite powerfully, as do references to 'competing chauvinisms' and 'the infusion of theology into politics' in Chapter 2, and the discussion of the influence of evangelical Christian Zionists (by Norton Mezvinsky) in Chapter 3. The description on the 'War on Terror' as 'vigilante masculinity' in Chapter 4 also gives an interesting gender dimension to the discussion, illustrated (fortunately not visually) by some fairly terrifying YouTube material. Chapter 1 lays a foundation for the discussion through surveying the thought of Edward Said and Michel Foucault, together with their critique by Aijaz Ahmad and Sadik al-Azm.

Chapter 5 surveys current attitudes towards Islam in the United States, including some of the comments which were made about Barak Obama's religious identity during the 2008 presidential election campaign, and Chapter 9 surveys some of the same ground but with a particular focus on the media and its treatment of the relationship between Islam and violence. Chapter 6, a discussion of 'Jihadiology', includes the puzzling statement that the thesis of

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David Cook's book *Understanding Jihad* is 'basically similar if not identical to that of Pipes *et al.*' (p. 109). This is surely a considerable exaggeration. There is a more nuanced discussion in Chapter 8, which includes reference to some of the problems within academe in the USA where distinguished professors of Middle Eastern or Islamic Studies find themselves being disbarred from taking up appointments at universities such as Yale (p. 154). On the basis of all these problems, the reader who aspires to promote better mutual understanding between the World of Islam and the West may well find him or herself feeling thoroughly depressed by the end of Chapter 9.

The final four chapters, however, may provide some solace, if not hope. In Chapter 10 Raymond W. Baker and Alexander Henry argue that in seeking to understand the Muslim World 'we' (though it is never quite defined who 'we' are) *can* do better. The authors plead for the importance of the traditional academic skills of translating and interpreting carefully. Chapter 11 provides a forensic analysis of Canadian and US security legislation, drawing out some of the lessons for both countries of any tendency towards McCarthyism. Chapter 12 subjects Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis to careful analysis, arguing that Huntington's book suffers considerably through sometimes being discussed

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rather than read, with the result that it is widely but inaccurately reported as arguing that Islam is inherently hostile or bloody. Huntington is 'not a Western chauvinist' (p. 237). And then in Chapter 13 Raymond W. Baker (this time on his own, though acknowledging the help of his co-author in Chapter 10) helpfully discusses 'Getting it wrong yet again: America and the Islamic mainstream', including some telling reflections on his own time as a graduate student at Harvard and his initial encounter with the realities of the Islamic World: 'my encounter with Cairo was a major shock. The Islamic world laid out so completely and so transparently in Cambridge ... simply did not exist.' (p. 251). The devastating consequences of this issue, in terms of the alienation of potential partners within the World of Islam, are made very clear. The more recent events in the Arab world in the spring of 2011, however, perhaps provide some hope that this situation is not irredeemable, at least until Pastor Terry Jones re-appeared in media headlines in April.

Overall, then, the book contains a lot of very worthwhile material, and provides a valuable perspective which comes from North America but not the United States, and the conference organisers and editors are to be commended for securing the wider distribution of its insights.

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